

Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond gets up close and personal with IMF chief Christine Lagarde, in Davos yesterday AP



DAVOS

Hammond: Blair's migration failure to blame for Brexit

By Lewis Smith

The Chancellor of the Exchequer yesterday accused Tony Blair of creating the conditions that led to Britain voting to leave the European Union. Philip Hammond said the former

Prime Minister's failure to control immigration was at the heart of Britain's rejection of the EU.

In particular, he highlighted the failure in 2004 to impose transitional controls on immigration from new EU member states as a root cause of the populace's disenchantment.

In 2004 the EU was expanded by the addition of 10 countries – Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Malta.

"There was clearly a strong strand of feeling against uncontrolled migration," he told an audience at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

"And I lay the responsibility for that squarely at the door of Prime Minis-

ter Blair who failed to impose a transitional regime in the UK in 2004.

"Britain took the full force of the tide in 2004, and that created a public perception which we still haven't shaken off to this day."

He added in a Sky interview: "We had a deluge of new migrants coming to the UK – a far higher number than the Government had predicted."

"I think the attitudes that were displayed in the referendum result were formed during that period when people felt very scared by the scale of migration from Eastern Europe."

"Tony Blair's Government told us to expect 30,000 – we got 300,000."

Mr Hammond believed very few people in Britain wanted to close the borders to immigration, but said it was "important to the British people" that there were controls.

Preferential migration arrangements "could" form part of the Brexit negotiations, he said.

"That could be a subject for the negotiations," he said. "What we have said clearly is that we can't accept the principle of free movement."

{i} Mr Hammond said the "strong preference" which he shared with Theresa May was to **secure a comprehensive free trade agreement** with the EU which allows Britain access to European markets.

INDUSTRY

Nissan boss puts Sunderland plant's future back in doubt

By Andrew Woodcock

Nissan will "re-evaluate" its car plant in Sunderland once the outcome of the Brexit negotiations is clear, the Japanese company's chief executive has said.

The car manufacturer announced in October that it was investing in the production of its new Qashqai and X-Trail models in Sunderland after receiving government assurances that EU withdrawal would not affect the plant's competitiveness.

Speaking to reporters at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Carlos Ghosn said he trusted the Prime Minister's assurances, but added that Nissan would want to review

the situation once the Brexit deal is concluded.

According to the Reuters news agency, he said: "Obviously when the package comes, you are going to have to re-evaluate the situation, and say: 'OK, is the competitiveness of your plant preserved or not?'"

"We are going to have to make decisions on investment within the next two to three years, so obviously the faster the Brexit results come, the better it is."

The Wall Street Journal reported Mr Ghosn as adding: "In the meantime, we are going to continue to run Sunderland with the assumption that Sunderland will remain competitive no matter the outcome of Brexit."

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1					2
3					
4					

The five-clue
Cryptic
Crossword

No 1922

Across

- 1 Form of entertainment completely dividing opinion (6)
- 3 Bowl me out as a common creature (6)
- 4 They've moved abroad, quietly, overwhelmed by various taxes (6)

Down

- 1 Peruse lines in English book that's turned up (6)
- 2 Beliefs that nine Spielberg film sequels would have created (6)

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